AMERICA READS CHALLENGE

*READ*WRITE*NOW!*

ACTIVITIES FOR READING AND WRITING FUN

A Joint Project of the U.S. Department of Education, the American Library Association, Pizza Hut, Inc., Scholastic Inc., and Reading Is Fundamental, Inc.

U.S. Department of Education
Richard W. Riley
Secretary

Acknowledgments

This booklet was developed as part of the AMERICA READS CHALLENGE: *READ*WRITE*NOW!* initiative to help children read well and independently by the end of the third grade. Additional activities are provided to help improve children's reading and writing skills through sixth grade.

The principal authors of this publication are Dr. Edward J. Kameenui and Dr. Deborah C. Simmons of the University of Oregon. The Department also wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Susan Roman and Eileen Fitzsimons of the American Library Association for providing reading lists and coordinating the design of this booklet, and Ernie Fleishman, John Mason, and illustrator Mark Teague of Scholastic Inc. for providing the illustrations.

Staff at the U.S. Department of Education who helped develop and produce this guide include Terry Peterson, Alan Ginsburg, Adriana de Kanter, Val Plisko, Susan Thompson-Hoffman, Manny Smith, Brenda Long, Azalea Saunders, Jessica Ellsworth, and Corey Chatis.

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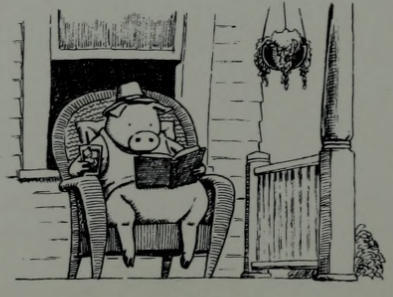

Introduction

National reading experts for President Clinton's AMERICA READS CHALLENGE: *READ*WRITE*NOW!* initiative developed *Activities for Reading and Writing Fun.* This booklet has been specially prepared to provide ideas for families, teachers, librarians, and other learning partners to use with all children -- including those with disabilities -- to help them read well and independently by the end of the third grade. The booklet also includes activities to help improve children's reading and writing skills through sixth grade.

Reading research has shown that reading just 30 minutes a day with or to a child significantly increases that child's reading ability. To meet the AMERICA READS CHALLENGE we encourage you to invite your own child or a child in your community to read five days a week for 30 minutes each day. On one of those days, you can be a learning partner by reading with or to your young reader for at least 30 minutes. Pick a place where you can meet. If the child is not your own, meet in a safe place agreeable to your young reader's family — a library, youth facility, church, or school. Take your reader to the library to get a library card and ask your reader to choose books to read. After you read with or to your young reader, choose one activity from this activities booklet to do with the child.

The activities in this booklet are presented in three sections: "Early Years" for infants and preschoolers, "Moving into Reading" for children through grade two, and "Encouraging the Young Reader" for older children through grade six. When you use these activities, you are developing in young children a love of reading and writing. It is less important for the child to get every word exactly right than it is to enjoy the experience. If he or she finishes one book and asks for another, you know you are succeeding! If the child writes even once a week and comes back for more, you know you are accomplishing your goal.

We wish you many wonderful hours of reading and writing with young children!

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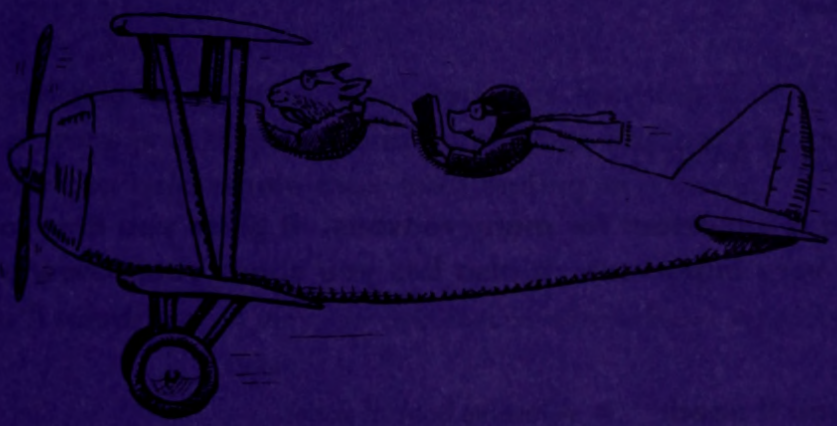
EARLY YEARS

Birth to Preschool



The Alphabet Song

Knowing the alphabet is a key to successful reading in later years. When you sing the alphabet song, your voice draws your child's attention to the letters of the alphabet.

What you'll need:

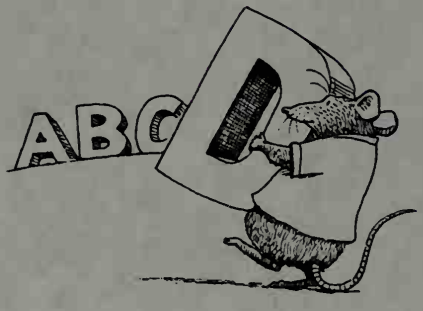
- You and your child.

What to do:

- Make eye contact with your child and begin singing the alphabet song:

  "A-B-C-D (pause) E-F-G (pause) H-I-J-K (pause) L-M-N-O-P (pause) Q-R-S (pause) T-U-V (pause) W-X (pause) Y and Z. Now I've sung my ABC's, next time won't you sing with me?"

- You can sing this song very slowly or you can sing it fast. You can also change your voice and sing it with a high, peeping voice (like a bird) or with a deep, dark voice (like a bear).



Funny Sounds and Words

Reading to your child is important for many reasons. It gives you time together. It tells your child that reading is very important. It also lets you share your knowledge and ideas with your child.

What you'll need:

- A favorite book of stories.

What to do:

- Choose a story to read to your child. As you read the story, use your voice to draw attention to a special, new word. You can say the word in a funny way, sing it, say it loud or soft, and even make funny faces when you say it.

- Show your child how to use the word throughout the day. The next time you read together, choose a new word.

The Name Game

Knowing the names of things is important to learning about the world. Children learn the names of things mostly from their parents and teachers. One of the first things children can learn is their own name.

What you'll need:

- You and your child.

What to do:

- Ask your child, "What's your name?" If your child answers correctly, say, "Yes, that's your name. Your name is Calvin." If your child doesn't know his or her name, say, "Your name is Calvin. What's your name?" and repeat it until your child says it correctly.
- Once your child knows his or her name, you can have fun with it. Look at your child. "What did you say your name was? Calvin? I thought your name was Snicklefritz." You can also say, "My name is Mother Goose. Is that my name?"

Your Story Ending

An important part of reading and listening to stories is learning that they have endings. Sometimes the end of a story is a surprise, and sometimes it is not. Once children become familiar with stories, they can help create their own ending to a story.

What you'll need:

- A story your child does not already know. A pencil and paper.

What to do:

- Read the story to your child. When you are close to the end of the story, stop reading. Ask your child how he or she would complete the story. Let your child say the words to you as you write the ending. Then finish reading the story. Talk about how the story's ending and your child's ending for it are different or the same.

Sounds Around

The sounds of words are very important to reading. One way to help children learn the sounds of words is to introduce them to real sounds in the world around them.

What you'll need:

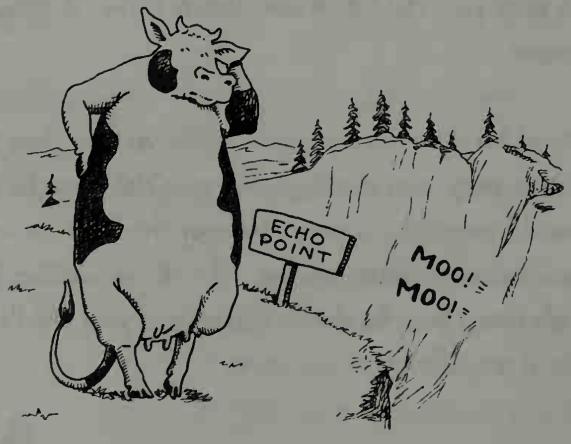
- Knowledge of the sounds of animals, objects, and the letters of the alphabet. A picture book of animals, objects, and letters.

What to do:

- Find a picture of a dog. Point to the picture and say, "The dog says, **Woof**, **woof**, **woof**." Find a picture of a cow. Say, "The cow says, **Moo**, **moo**, **moo**." Repeat this with pictures of other animals or birds. Then point to an object that makes noise, such as a car or a motorcycle.

- Once your child knows some sounds that animals and objects make, show your child the sounds for individual letters. For example, write the letter **m** on a piece of paper, and say, "This is the letter **m**. When we see this letter, we make the sound, **mmmmmmmm**. What sound do we say for this letter? Yes. **Mmmmmmmmm**."

- As your child learns the sounds associated with some objects and animals, you can introduce more letters.



Rhyme Time

Children love words that rhyme. Rhyming words are important to reading because they call children's attention to the sounds inside words.

What you'll need:

- Some words that rhyme.

What to do

- Think of words that rhyme. Say two words that rhyme, such as **cat** and **hat**. Then say, "Listen to these two words that rhyme, **cat** (pause) **hat**." Then say, "Now I'm going to say other words that rhyme with cat and hat. Here's another one, **rat**. Now you tell me another word that rhymes with cat, hat, and rat (such as **fat**)."

- Repeat this game with other words that rhyme, such as:

  pot, tot, lot, hot
  pin, tin, fin, in
  tag, rag, sag, bag

Now About Books

Children first learn to read from books. It is important for children to know how books "work."

What you'll need:

- A storybook.

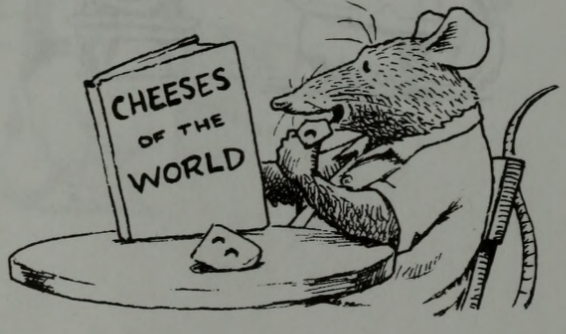
What to do:

- Show the book to your child and talk about what a book is. "I'm going to read this book to you. As you can see, it has words and pictures in it. Some books have make-believe stories in them. Other books tell us about real life."

- Then show your child that books are made up of words. "I can read this book to you because the words (point to them) tell me what to say. When you read, you say these words out loud or to yourself."

- Then show how books are read. "When we read a book, we start at the front of the book (point to the front) and we read through to the end of the book (thumb through all the pages until you are finished with the book)."

- Point to the title of the book. "This is the title of the book. The title is the name of the book. It tells you what the book is about. Now you point to the title of the book. Good."



Stories Come to Life

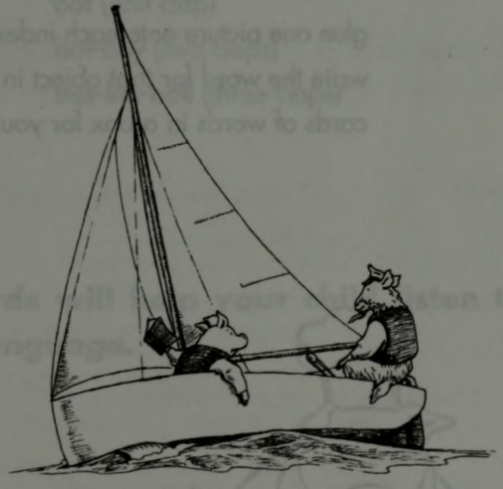
Reading stories is important, but creating and acting out a story makes it come to life. This activity will keep children interested as they listen to stories.

What you'll need:

- A book or story that is familiar to your child, and room to move about.

What to do:

- Select a story that your child knows. Tell your child that you will read the story out loud. As you read, find one word such as **HOPPED**, and say it in a loud voice. Ask your child to act out the "loud" word when he hears it (by hopping).
- You may then choose words to say loudly that show emotions ("John was **SAD**"), or words that are nouns ("Bart saw a **DOG**" or "The **LEAF** fell to the ground"), or words that show action ("The leaf **FELL** to the ground").



Alphabet Picture Book

Knowing the alphabet is a key to successful reading in later years. There are many ways to learn the alphabet and have fun in the process.

What you'll need:

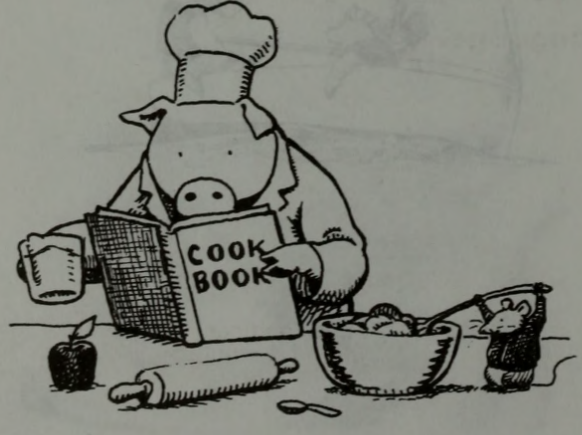
- Magazines, large index cards, a card box, scissors, glue, a marker.

What to do:

- Ask your child to help you cut out magazine pictures of objects with names that start with the various letters of the alphabet (for example, an apple = A). Glue each picture onto a large index card and write on the card the uppercase (capital) letter of the word that describes the picture. Keep the index cards of letters in a card box for your child to look through.

- When your child has learned the uppercase letters, write each uppercase and lowercase letter of the alphabet on an index card.

- Then ask your child to look through magazines to find pictures of objects with names that begin with one of the letters of the alphabet. Let your child cut out the pictures and glue one picture onto each index card. Under each picture, write the word for that object in large letters. Keep the index cards of words in a box for your child to look through.



Sound Clapping

Listening to sounds in words is important. Knowing where sounds of words begin and end is also important to reading.

What you'll need:

- A list of two- or three-syllable words.

What to do:

- Tell your child that you will say a word and clap for the main sound parts in the word. For example, "The first word is **Mama**. I'll clap and say the word again. **Ma-ma**. (Say **Ma-ma** and clap as you say each part of the word for two claps.) "Now you clap the rhythm when I say **Mama**." Take your child's name and clap it out. For example, say, **Ma–ri–a** and clap three times.

- Repeat this activity with the following words:

ba-by (two claps)
ice cream (two claps)
base-ball (two claps)
ba-na-na (three claps)
ap-ple (two claps)
bat (one clap)
bat-boy (two claps)
bas-ket-ball (three claps)

I'm Thinking of a Sound

Playing with the sounds of words will help your child listen to sounds and words, and understand the importance of language.

What you'll need:

- Names of objects.

What to do:

- Say to your child, "I'm thinking of the sound **sssss** as in sat. Can you tell me another word that begins with **sssss**?" Your child names one word. "Can you tell me another word that begins with **sssss**?"

  Repeat this game using different sounds.

Guess the Rhyme

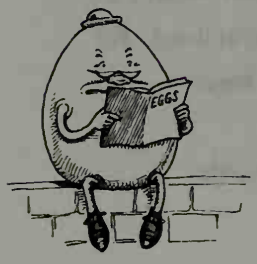
Children love to guess at words that rhyme.

What you'll need:

- A book of nursery rhymes. Books with repeated phrases or short rhyming poems.

What to do:

- Read the entire nursery rhyme to your child. Now reread the nursery rhyme leaving out the last word of every other line of the rhyme. Let your child fill in the last word that goes in the rhyme. For example:



Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall.
Humpty Dumpty had a great _____

- Do this with other nursery rhymes.

Picture Play

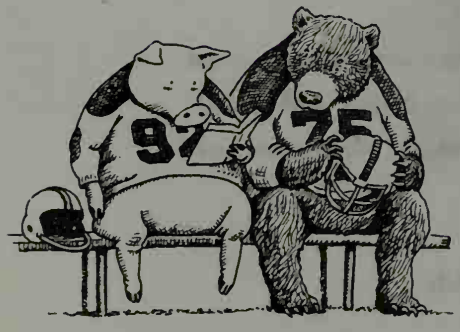
Listening to a story for what happens is an important part of enjoying reading.

What you'll need:

- A story that has pictures on each page. A piece of paper to cover the pictures.

What to do:

- Select a good story with colorful pictures. Cover the picture on the first page and read the page. Stop reading at the end of the page. Ask your child to tell you what the page was about. Then ask your child to guess what the picture will show. Show the picture and talk about it. Then go to the next page and play "Picture Play" again.



Ask a Question

You can help your child develop early reading skills by reading stories out loud and asking your child to think about what is read.

What you'll need:

- Interesting storybooks.

What to do:

- Have your child select a storybook. Sit so that your child can see the print and pictures as you read. Read a page of the story, then stop and ask a question. For example, "How do you think the little train felt in this story?" "Why was the elephant sad?" "What do you think the silly monkey will do next?" Encourage your child to talk and relate what you've read to the child's own life. "How are you like the little train?" "Have you ever done anything like what the silly monkey did?"

Story Smarts and Parts

Do you remember that favorite story you had as a child — "Cinderella" or "Jack and the Beanstalk"? Children develop favorites early in their lives and want to hear the same stories over and over again.

What you'll need:

- Interesting stories in which it is easy to tell what happens first, next, and last. Fairy tales like **Goldilocks and the Three Bears** or **The Three Little Pigs** are good for this purpose because they have easily identified parts.

What to do:

- Read the story. At the end of the story, ask your child what happened at the very beginning of the story. Then ask what happened next, and next, and next. Then ask what happened at the end of the story.

- Praise your child for remembering part of the story, and help your child remember other parts when necessary.

Preview Time

Use television to learn what your child already knows about a subject and to help your child develop new knowledge.

What you'll need:

- An interesting television program about an animal, a sport, or a place familiar to your child. A piece of paper and a pencil.

What to do:

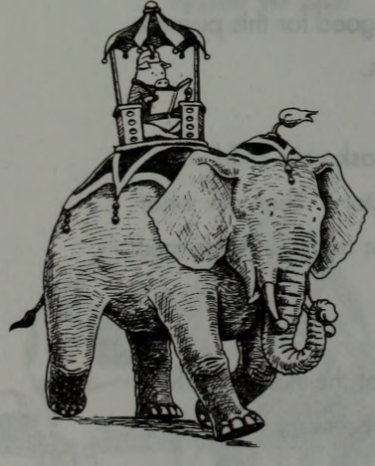
- Find a program in the television schedule that interests your child.

  Before you and your child watch the program (suppose it is about elephants), ask your child, "Tell me what you know about elephants."

  Make a list of all the things your child knows about elephants. For example, your child might say, "They are big. They are gray. They live in the jungle." To which you can say, "That's great. You know a lot about elephants."

  Then tell your child, "When you watch this program, I want you to try to remember the new things you are learning about elephants. When you hear something new, tell me, and I'll write it down."

  After the program, read the list of new things your child learned about the subject (elephants) and add the things your child already knew. "See how much you know about (elephants) now."



- Repeat this routine as often as you can whenever your child is watching an educational program.

BEGINNING TO READ

Preschool through Grade Two

The Sound Shopping Trip

Listening for the first sounds in words is an important step in learning to connect language and reading.

What you'll need:

- Magazines or catalogs with pictures of objects children know.

What to do:

- Have your child choose a magazine or catalog. Invite your child to go on a make-believe shopping trip. Tell your child you will make believe you are shopping for things in the magazine.

  Have your child close his or her eyes. Point to an object on the page. Then have your child open his or her eyes. Ask "What are you going to buy?" If your child says, "A hat," ask, "What sound does **hat** start with?"

  Then say, "Good. **Hat** starts with the sound **h**."

- Repeat the steps, with each of you taking a turn shopping for something and then naming the first sound of the word that describes it.

Now You Hear It, Now You Don't

Hearing and saying the parts of words help prepare children to learn to read.

What you'll need:

- A list of words with two parts, like **baseball**, **raincoat**, **sunshine**, and **motorcycle**.

What to do:

- Sit beside your child. Tell the child that you will say a word and then you will leave off part of the word. Ask your child to tell you what part you left off.

  For example, tell the child, "Let's say **sunshine** without **sun**; what part is left? That's right, **shine**." Repeat this activity with another word: "Let's say **motorcycle** without **motor**; what part is left? That's right, **cycle**." "Now you try it. Say '**manhole**' without **man**."

- As your child learns this game, try leaving off the last part of words (**manhole** without **hole** is **man**; **motorcycle** without **cycle** is **motor**).

1-2-3

Each sound in a word is important. To help your child begin to read, practice this game of listening and naming each sound in a word.

What you'll need:

- Pictures of objects that are familiar to your child, cut from magazines or newspapers. The names of the objects should have three sounds such as **s-u-n**, **m-a-n**, **d-o-g**, **c-a-t**, **p-i-g**, and **c-o-w**.

What to do:

- Sit across from your child at a small table or on the floor. Put the pictures face down in the middle of the table.

  Tell your child, "Let's play a game called 1-2-3. You pick a picture. When I hold up one finger, you say the first sound of the word describing the picture. When I hold up two fingers, tell me the next sound. When I hold up three fingers, tell me the last sound."

  "Let me show you how." Select a picture and say the word, for example, **sun**. Hold up one finger and say **s**. Hold up two fingers and say **u**. Hold up three fingers and say **n**. "The sounds in **sun** are **s-u-n**."

  "Now, you try it." Your child picks a picture and names the picture. "Good, that is a **dog**. Tell me the sounds in **dog**." Hold up one finger for the **d**. Then, hold up two fingers for the **o**. Then, hold up three fingers for the **g**. "Good, the sounds in **dog** are **d-o-g**.

- Do this again with other words. If pictures with three sounds are easy for your child, you may want to find pictures with four sounds.

Same Sounds Game

Before children can read words, they need to know the sounds of letters. This game gives children practice in matching sounds and letters.

What you'll need:

- A set of index cards or pieces of paper on which you've written a few capital letters of the alphabet--one letter on each card. Make another set with the same letters. Start with 8 to 10 letters. Add more letters as your child learns more.

What to do:

- Mix up the alphabet cards and place them face down on the table.

Tell your child, "We're going to play a game in which you try to find two of the same sounds. When you find two that are the same and you say the sound, you get to pick up the cards. Let me show you how."

Turn over one card (for example, **T**) and say the sound **t**. Turn over another card (for example, **S**) and say the sound **s**. Ask, "Are the sounds the same?" Your child says no. "That's right, they are not the same, so I don't get to pick them up."

"It's your turn to find the ones that are the same." Your child turns over one card and says the sound, then picks a second card and says the sound. If they are the same, your child gets to keep the cards. Then your child gets to pick two more cards. If the cards are not the same, turn the cards face down and have your child try again.

If your child does not know the sound, say, "This sound is **s**."

The goal of the game is to pick up all the cards.

Letter-Sound Grab Bag

Here's another way to practice the sounds of letters. In this game, children practice naming letter-sounds correctly and quickly.

What you'll need:

- A set of cards on which you've written some letters of the alphabet. (Start with just a few letters; add more letters as your child learns more.) A small paper bag. A timer or watch with a second hand.

What to do:

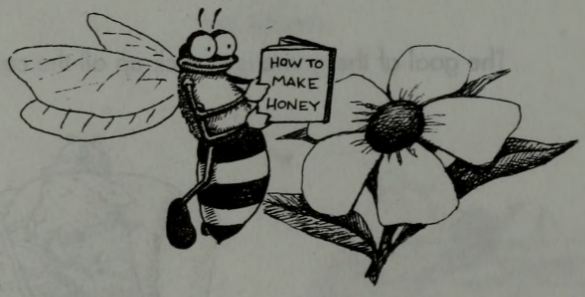
- Put a few letters having sounds your child knows into a paper bag. Tell your child that you want to see how many sounds he or she can name in one minute.

  "When I say **Start**, you reach into the bag and pull out one card. Say the sound and then reach in to get another. Keeping picking out the cards until I say **Stop**. If you don't know a sound, I'll tell it to you, and you put it back in the bag."

  At the end of the minute, count the number of sounds your child named correctly.

  If your child does not know a sound, say "This sound is **s**."

- Do this game again. Encourage your child to name more sounds than the last time you played together.



The Color of Sounds

Knowing the sound of a letter is one of the most important steps before learning to read words. Here's a game to practice the sounds of letters.

What you'll need:

- A picture from a coloring book, a blank sheet of paper, and crayons.

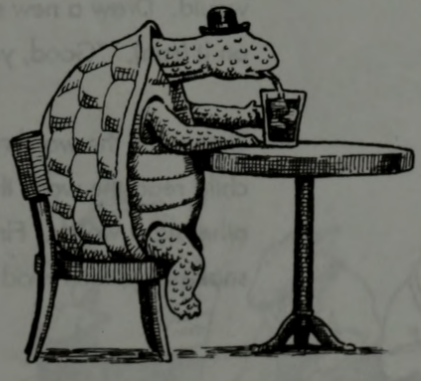
What to do:

- Sit beside your child and say, "I'll write a letter on this paper. If you can tell me the sound of the letter and two words for things that start with that sound, you get to color one part of the picture."

  "Let's try one." Write a letter on the paper. Start with one you are sure your child knows. Have your child name the sound. "That's right, the sound is **t**. Can you name two things that start with **t**? Very good, **table** and **turtle** start with **t**. Pick a part of the picture to color."

  If your child does not know the sound, say, "This sound is **t**. Let's try another." Write another sound and come back to the **t** the next try.

- Do this again with other sounds until all parts of the picture are colored.



Word Snakes

Children become excited about reading when they begin to use the letter-sounds they know to read words. An important part of reading words is learning to blend the sounds to make a word.

What you'll need:

- A list of easy words that have letters with sounds your child knows. Some good words to start with are :

Sam	**rag**	**fin**
man	**mad**	**fan**
ran	**sit**	**fat**
tan	**sat**	**fit**
am	**dig**	**dim**

- A piece of paper with a wavy line on which you can write words.

What to do:

- Ask your child, "Do you know how snakes can make the **sssssssss** sound for a long time? We're going to say the sounds in words just the way a snake does. We'll stretch out the sounds. Let me show you how."

  Write a word on the snake line. "I'm going to say the word **fan** the way a snake would — **fffffaaaaaannnnn**." As you say each sound, trace your finger along the snake line. "The word is **fan**."

- Invite your child to say a new word the way a snake would. Draw a new snake and write three new letters on it (**run**). "Good, you read **run** the snake way."

- Then write the word **run** on a straight line and have your child read the word the fast way—**run**. Do this again with other easy words. First, have your child read the word the snake way, then read it the fast way.

Words I've Heard and Silly Words

When children learn to read, they use the letter-sounds they already know to make new words. In this game, children make words, some familiar and some not.

What you'll need:

- Three containers (small boxes or margarine tubs). Small pieces of paper with letters that have sounds your child knows. Make several copies of the letters that are used often in words, such as **a**, **s**, **t**, **r**, **e**, **n**, **i**, **g**.

What to do:

- Sit beside your child. Put the three containers in front of you. Place vowels in the middle container. Put consonants in the first and last containers.

  Tell your child, "We're going to make words using letters in these containers. Some will be words you've heard, and some will be silly words. I'll show you how to make a word."

  Pick a letter from the first container and say its sound (for example, **t**). Pick a letter from the next container (for example, **i**). Pick a letter from the last container (for example, **g**). Now, I'll put the sounds together, **tttiiig**. The word is **tig**.

  Ask your child, "Is that a word you've heard or is that a silly word? That's right, it's a silly word."

- "Okay, it's your turn to make a word." Have your child select a letter from each container and make new words.

In the News

Once children learn to read words, it is important for them to practice reading those words again and again. Children soon learn that words they know are in many things we read.

What you'll need:

- A newspaper or magazine. A colored marker or highlighter. Scissors, a piece of paper, and paste or glue. A blank piece of paper.

What to do:

- Pick a page in the newspaper. Go through the page circling or highlighting words your child can read. Tell your child, "Today, we're going to find words so that you can make your own newspaper of words on this paper."

  "In this game, you read the words I've marked. Each one you read, you cut out and glue onto this blank piece of paper. We'll add more words each day. Soon you'll have a full page of words you know from the newspaper."

Letter Swap

Good readers learn to recognize and make new words by swapping letters within words. In this activity, children build new words by swapping letter-sounds.

What you'll need:

- Two words written in large print. The first word is a whole word (such as **sat**). The second word has a blank for the first letter (_at). A set of letters (**g, s, t, m, p, r, h, f, k, l**) with each letter written on a separate piece of paper.

What to do:

- Sit beside your child. Put the large-print words in front of your child.

sat
_at

Say, "We're going to see how many words we can make like **sat.** I'll pick a letter from the pile. My sound is **r**. I can change **sat** to **rat**. Put the **r** in the blank space in front of **at**."

- Have your child do this again, picking different letters and making new words. Change to a new word such as **mop** or **fill**.

- Do this activity often with new words.

Spell Down

After children know letter-sounds and can read short words, they can begin to write the words they read. Spelling out words strengthens children's reading skills.

What you'll need:

- A set of pictures of objects that are familiar to your child and have names that are easy to spell (**sun**, **man**, **dog**, **cat**, **fan**, **rug**). These can be cut from magazines. Colored markers, pens or pencils, and paper.

What to do:

- Put the pictures face down in the middle of the table. Your child selects the top picture, names the picture, and then spells the word.

  If your child misses a letter, have him or her sound out the word and try again to spell it. You may need to write the word for your child before the child names the object and tries to spell the word for it again.

The Match Game

Some words cannot be read by saying the sounds in the word. Words like *the, said, are, don't, have, one, two, love,* and *you* must be learned as whole words.

What you'll need:

- Ten pieces of paper or cards with one word written on each piece (start with **the**, **said**, **are**, etc.). Another set of 10 cards with the same words written on them.

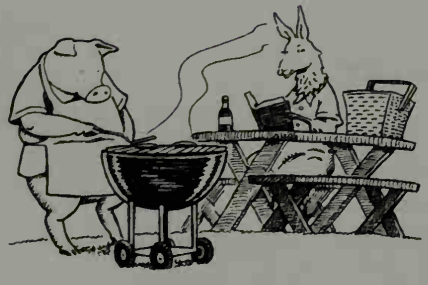
What to do:

- Mix the words together. Give your child five cards, and give yourself five cards. Put the rest of the cards in a pile, face down on the table.

  Both of you pick up your cards to see if you have two words that are the same among all your cards. If so, say the word and put them down as a pair. Then pick two more cards from the pile.

  If neither of you has a pair, draw a card from the pile. Take turns until all the cards have been drawn or one player has gotten rid of all of his or her cards.

  The player with the most matching pairs is the winner.



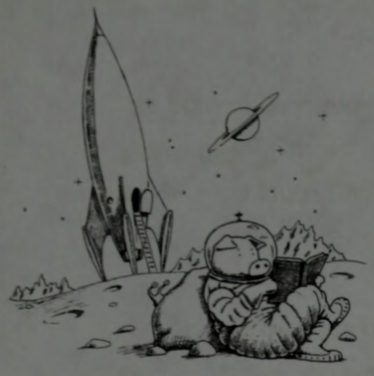
Word Tag

It is important for children to read words in sentences and stories, so they realize that reading is about understanding.

What you'll need:

- An easy-to-read story with many words your child can already sound out or read.

What to do:



- Tell your child, "In this story, I'll read some of the words and you'll read some words. When it's your turn to read a word, I will tap your shoulder." Start reading. As you come to a word that your child can read, tap the child's shoulder.
- Keep taking turns reading the story. You can go back and reread parts of the same stories for extra practice.

Story Reruns

One of the ways children learn to read quickly and correctly is to have repeated practice reading the same words.

What you'll need:

- A short story with words your child can sound out or read as whole words.

What to do:

- Tell your child, "You're going to read the same story two times. Each time you read it, try to read more words correctly."
- At the end of the first reading, help your child with any words that the child missed or took a long time to figure out. Then ask your child to read the story again.
- Then have your child tell you what the story was about. In story reading, you want to make sure that your child thinks about what is read.

Story Sprint

After children can read words correctly, they can begin to work on speed.

What you'll need:

- A story with words your child can sound out or read as whole words. A watch or timer.

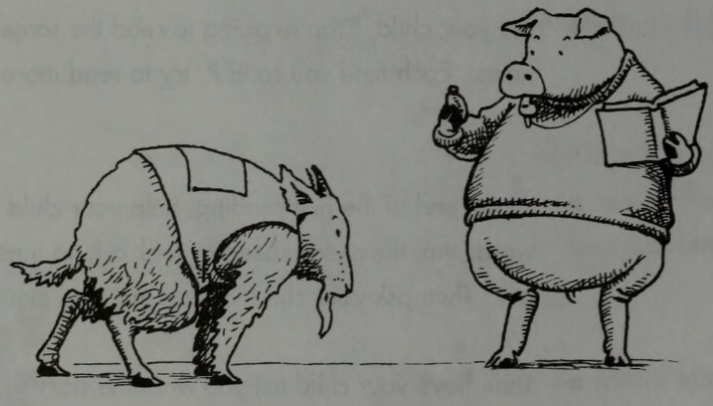
What to do:

- Tell your child, "In this game, you're going to read a story as if you're in a race. Each time you read the story, try to read it faster with fewer mistakes."

  Set the timer for one minute. Remind your child to read as quickly and correctly as possible. Say, "Start." Begin timing. At the end of the minute, say, "Stop," and count the number of words read correctly.

- Help your child with words he or she did not know. Have your child read the same story again for one minute. Count the number of words read correctly. Compare the number of words to the number read in the first reading. Have your child read the story a third time.

- Say, "When you practice reading the same story again and again, you can read faster and faster. Good job."



ENCOURAGING THE YOUNG READER

Grades Three through Six

Building Stories

Stories are built in much the same way that houses are. Just as houses have floors, walls, and a roof, stories have some basic parts. Every story has *characters* (the people or animals in the story), a *setting* (the time and place the story occurs), a *problem* (a difficulty that the character(s) have to overcome and solve), and a *resolution* (a solution to the difficulty or problem). Knowing the parts of a story helps children understand the whole story.

What you'll need:

- A brief story or a fable.

What to do:

- Choose a short story, fable, or fairy tale for your child to read. You may want to read the story ahead of time to make sure it works for this activity.
- Make an outline on lined paper with the following parts:

Title: _____

Main character: _____

_____

Setting: _____

_____

Problem: _____

_____

_____

Resolution: _____

_____

- Ask your child to read part of the story and to identify the character(s). Say, "Is Molly a character in the story? Is she a main character? Yes, the story is mostly about Molly and her science project. Let's write that on the sheet where it says **main character**."

- Then ask your child to tell you where and when the story takes place (a town or city, state or country, today or in the past). This is the **setting** of the story.

- Then, after your child reads about half of the story, stop and say, "What is the problem the main character of this story is facing or having? Let's write that on the sheet where it says **problem**."

- When your child finishes the story, ask the child how the problem in the story was worked out. Say, "That is the **resolution** of the story. Let's write that on the sheet."

The One-Minute Dash

Reading quickly and with ease is very important to successful reading, but, like running, it requires a lot of coaching and practice. To become a fluent reader, your child must practice reading quickly. Remember, however, that too much practice at one time is not helpful.

What you'll need:

- A watch or clock with a second hand and a book. Your child must be able to read the book with little or no help.

What to do:

- Tell your child, "Let's play a game called the one-minute dash. I want to see how many words you can read in one minute." (Point to a place in the book where the child should begin reading.)

  Then, "When I say **Go**, I want you to begin reading. After one minute, I'll tell you to stop." When your child is ready to start, say, "Get ready. . . Set. . . **GO!**" Check your watch. After a minute, ask your child to stop reading.

  Count the total number of words your child read. If you like, make a chart to show how many words per minute your child has read in a week, two weeks, a month, or more.

Word Wizard

Learning about words is important to learning inside and outside school. The more words a child knows, the more the child will learn.

What you'll need:

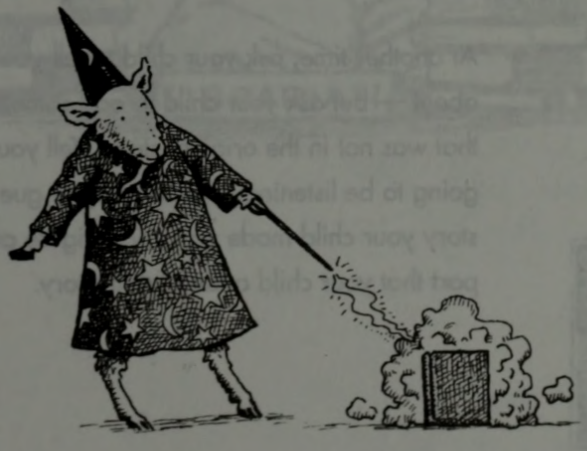
- A newspaper, magazine, or book. A notebook.

What to do:

- Have your child find a word in a newspaper, magazine, or book that he or she does not know and has not seen before. For example, your child may not know the word **foretell** (meaning "to predict or tell beforehand," as in, "The woman in red could **foretell** the future").

- Your child might also find a word that is familiar but used in a new way. For example, the word **boat** means a small vessel used for getting around by water. However, when **boat** is used in the sentence, "The people were all in the same **boat**," it means "faced with the same problems."

- Ask your child to listen for a new word in everyday talk or look for a new word in the newspaper. Have your child find a new word or an old word used in a new way each day. Ask your child to keep track of the words in a special notebook.



In Laughing Order: The Comic Strips

When children read about events, they must keep the major actions in order. Children can develop a sense for order while reading comic strips.

What you'll need:

- Your child's favorite comic strip.

What to do:

- Find a comic strip that you and your child enjoy. Before reading the strip, cut it out and separate the frames. Mix them up and ask your child to put the frames in the correct order. Once they are in order, have your child read the comic strip and tell you what the strip means or is saying.

Tall Tale Retell

Children love to read and talk about tall tales—stories about events, people, and places that are bigger than life and not real.

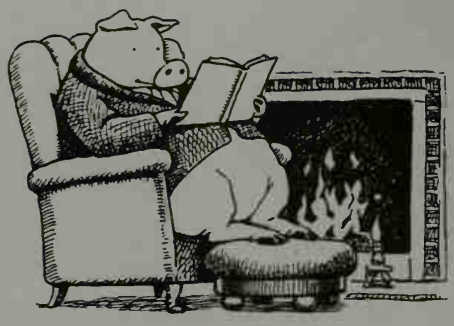
What you'll need:

- A book of tall tales (ask your librarian for help in finding a tall tale book).

What to do:

- Have your child choose a tall tale to read. Ask your child to read it silently. Then ask your child to tell you how the tall tale reminds him or her of something that has happened in real life—at home, at school, or in the news.

- At another time, ask your child to tell you what the story is about — but ask your child to add something to the story that was not in the original story. Tell your child that you are going to be listening very carefully to guess the part of the story your child made up! Try to figure out the "tall tale" part that your child added to the story.



Word Families

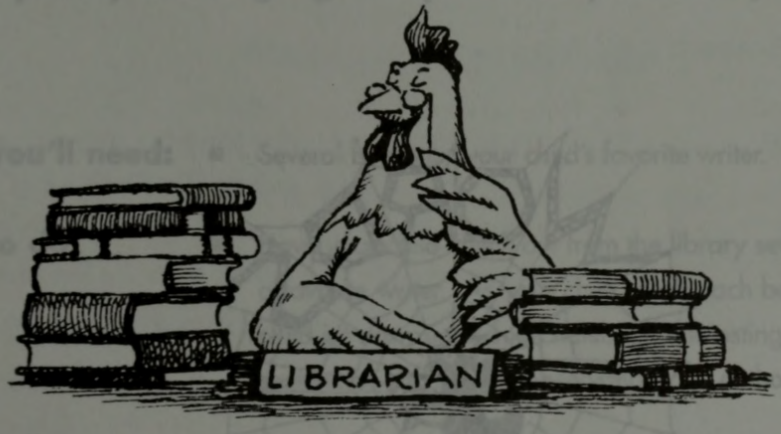
Words come in all shapes and sizes, but many words that children read and hear come in word families.

What you'll need:

- Pencil and paper.

What to do:

- Give your child a word (such as **add**) that is found in many other words (such as **addition** and **adding**). Ask your child to think of other words that are "roots" for related words, such as **compete,** and ask the child to write out the related words (**competition**, **competitor**, **competitive**).
- Ask your child to keep a record of the "word families." See how many words made from root words your child can find in a month.



Word Webs

Words can be used to describe other words. Everyone likes to play with words and use words to talk about other words.

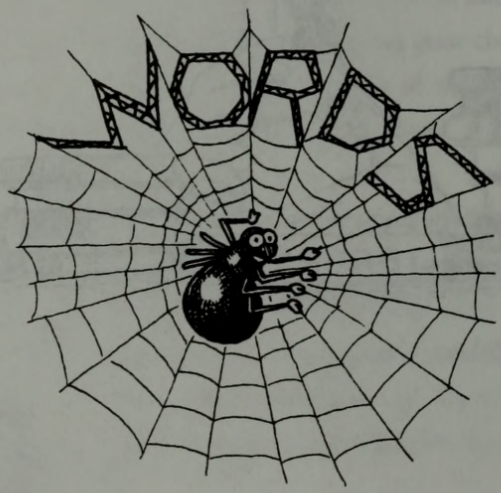
What you'll need:

- Paper and pencil.

What to do:

- Choose a word such as **vehicle** and write it in the center of a sheet of paper. Then ask your child to think of other words that tell more about the word **vehicle**. Children might think about types of vehicles (buses, cars, trucks, boats), uses for vehicles (transportation, recreation), and words describing how vehicles look and move (sturdy, fast, dangerous).

  Then ask your child to write the words on the sheet and connect them to the main word **vehicle**. This will show your child how the words are linked to the main word and form a "word web."



Lessons Learned

An important part of reading is guessing what the lesson or theme of a story is.

What you'll need:

- A collection of fables from the library.

What to do:

- Choose a short fable to read to your child. Read the story but stop before you get to the moral at the end of the story. Ask your child to state what lesson the story has to tell. Then read the moral (usually the last line of a fable).

- At the end of this game, talk to your child about the story. Were there any surprises in the story?

Favorite Writers

Children who read a great deal often have favorite writers. These writers become favorites because of clever ways they use language or special story lines they develop.

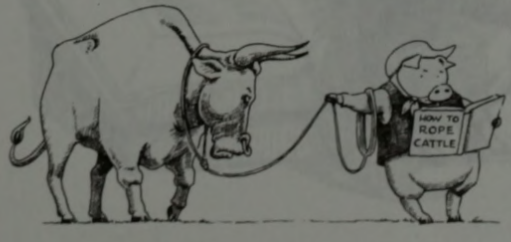
What you'll need:

- Several books by your child's favorite writer. A notebook.

What to do:

- Have your child check out from the library several books by a favorite writer. As your child reads each book, have the child jot down in a small notebook interesting phrases, or sentences, and special observations the author makes.

- Skim one or more of the books yourself, and read to your child some phrases you like in the author's words.



The Moose Cafe

Opportunities for reading and writing are all around us—even when the subject is food.

What you'll need:

- Menus.

What to do:

- Go with your child to several restaurants to ask for free copies of their menus. Take them home. Ask your child to read several of the items on each menu with their descriptions.

  Then ask your child to make up a menu for an imaginary restaurant—the Moose Cafe or the Tuna Bake Bistro—with creative descriptions.

My Turn, Your Turn — Our Story

Writing stories is fun, but it really comes alive when your child creates and writes a story with you.

What you'll need:

- Paper, pencil, and a story title.

What to do:

- Create or choose an exciting title for a story you would like to write with your child, such as "The Golden Eye" or "Suddenly Midnight and Silence." Write the title on a sheet of paper and invite your child to write the first sentence. You write the second line. Take turns writing sentences until the story is complete.

- When the story is finished, invite the family to a story-reading session, or read the story to the family during dinner.

The Dictionary Game

Working with reference books like a dictionary is important to learning about words.

What you'll need:

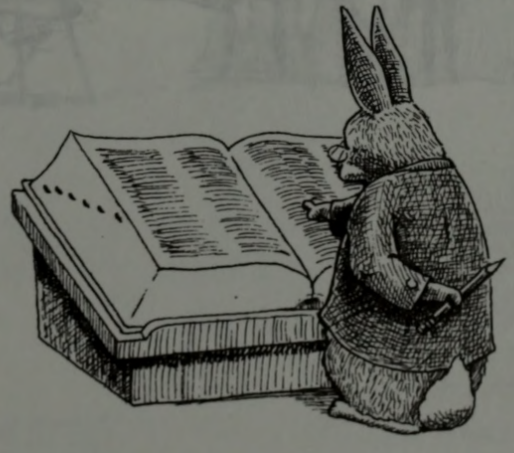
- Paper, pencil, a dictionary, and the list of questions given below, each written on a separate piece of paper.

What to do:

- Fold each question in half and put them all in a hat. Ask your child to read a question and then use the dictionary to answer it.

  Is a **burnoose** the cousin of a **moose**?
  Can you **bustle**, **hustle**, and **jostle** at the same time?
  Is a **hog** likely to **hog** all the **hogmeat**?
  How much **bread** is there in **breadfruit**?
  Is it possible for a **fowl** to have a **jowl**?
  Can a **gnu** be a **guru** to a few?
  Is a **lingbird** likely to **linger** long on a clothesline?
  Are **calligraphy** and **otography** the same?
  Can you **abandon** an **abalone**?
  Can an **ermine** be a **hermit**?
  Explain why we drive on a **parkway** and park on a **driveway**.
  Can a **sphinx** put a **jinx** on you?

- Once your child answers these questions, ask your child to develop some questions for you, using challenging words from the dictionary.



Journey Journal

A journal is an excellent way for your child to write about everyday events and to record thoughts. It is fun to keep a journal when on a special trip.

What you'll need:

- Journals or notebooks and pencils for you and your child.

What to do:

- Plan a special trip with your child to a museum, zoo, sports game, or other place of special interest to your child. Ask your child to take along a journal to use for noting interesting things seen or heard.

  Tell your child you are taking a journal too, so that you also can write about your experiences. Compare your journals throughout the day, and especially at the end of the journey.

Family Words Matter

Reading and writing can enable family members to share important life stories.

What you'll need:

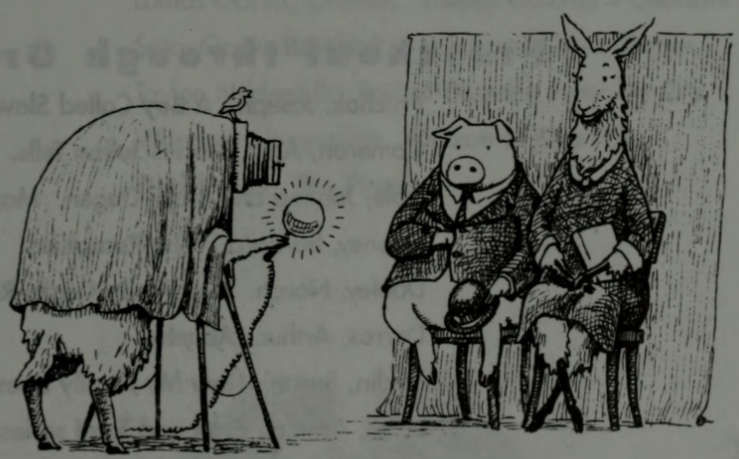
- Letters from grandparents or other family members.

What to do:

- Select a family member whom your child knows well and likes. Ask the family member to write a letter to your child. The letter should tell a story, funny event, or something about your child.

  When your child receives the letter, have the child read the letter. Ask your child to write a return letter to the family member, telling a story or something about the family member that the family has told the child.

- Repeat the letter writing with another family member.



SUGGESTED READING LIST

This reading list is provided by the American Library Association for you and your young reader*. If you choose to use this list, draw your child's attention to the books on the list, starting with those for the appropriate grade level. Go to the library and find one or more of the books listed here. Let your child look at the front and back covers of the book(s) and thumb through the book(s). Ask whether the book(s) interest your child. If so, check out the book(s). If not, find another book on this list and repeat the process until your child is happy.

Birth to Preschool

Bang, Molly. **Ten, Nine, Eight.**

Brown, Margaret Wise. **Goodnight Moon.**

Burton, Virginia. **Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel.**

Carle, Eric. **The Very Hungry Caterpillar.**

Henkes, Kevin. **Julius the Baby of the World.**

Keats, Ezra Jack. **The Snowy Day.**

Numeroff, Laura and Felicia Bond. **If You Give a Mouse a Cookie.**

Opie, Iona/Wells, Rosemary. **My Very First Mother Goose.**

Potter, Beatrix. **The Tale of Peter Rabbit.**

Prelutsky, Jack. **Read Aloud Rhymes for the Very Young.**

Williams, Vera. **"More, More, More," Said the Baby.**

Preschool through Grade 2

Bruchak, Joseph. **A Boy Called Slow.**

Cameron, Ann. **Stories Julian Tells.**

Cole, Joanna and Bruce Degen. **Magic School Bus series.**

Cooney, Barbara. **Miss Rumphius.**

Dooley, Norah. **Everybody Cooks Rice.**

Dorros, Arthur. **Abuela.**

Kuklin, Susan. **How My Family Lives in America.**

Lobel, Arnold. **Frog and Toad series.**

McCloskey, Robert. **Make Way for Ducklings.**

McKissack, Patricia. **Mirandy and Brother Wind.**

Sendak, Maurice. **Where the Wild Things Are.**

Viorst, Judith. **Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day.**

*The U.S. Department of Education recommends that families review this list and make their own decision on the suitability of the books for their children.

Grades 3 and 4

Ada, Alma Flor. **My Name Is Maria Isabel.**

Cleary, Beverly. **Ramona the Pest.**

Fritz, Jean. **You Want Women to Vote, Lizzie Stanton?**

Hurwitz, Johanna. **Much Ado about Aldo.**

Mathis, Sharon Bell. **The Hundred Penny Box.**

Mochizuki, Ken. **Baseball Saved Us.**

Myers, Walter Dean. **Mop, Moondance, and the Nagasaki Knights.**

Uchida, Yoshiko. **Jar of Dreams.**

White, E. B. **Charlotte's Web.**

Wilder, Laura Ingalls. **The Little House series.**

Grades 5 and 6

Ancona, George. **Powwow.**

Curtis, Christopher Paul. **The Watsons Go to Birmingham — 1963.**

Cushman, Karen. **The Midwife's Apprentice.**

Frank, Anne. **The Dairy of a Young Girl.**

Freedman, Russell. **Lincoln: A Photobiography.**

Hamanada, Sheila. **The Journey: Japanese Americans, Racism and Renewal.**

Hamilton, Virginia. **Sweet Whispers, Brother Rush.**

Lomas Garza, Carmen. **Family Pictures = Cuadros de Familia.**

Soto, Gary. **Baseball in April and Other Stories.**

Taylor, Mildred D. **Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry.**

Woodson, Jacqueline. **Maizon at Blue Hill.**

Zindel, Paul. **The Pigman.**

RESOURCES

AMERICA READS CHALLENGE: *READ*WRITE*NOW!* Publications

The following AMERICA READS CHALLENGE: *READ*WRITE*NOW!* publications have been placed on the U.S. Department of Education's Internet Web site: <http://www.ed.gov> for your unlimited use.

- READ*WRITE*NOW! Basic Kit: Activities for Reading and Writing Fun (of which this booklet is a part)
- READ*WRITE*NOW! Partners Tutoring Program
- READ*WRITE*NOW! Early Childhood Kit
- READ*WRITE*NOW! Just Add Kids — A Resource Directory of Learning Partners, Reading Sites, and Other Literacy Organizations That Serve Children and Their Families
- READ*WRITE*NOW! Learning to Read, Reading to Learn: Helping Children with Learning Disabilities to Succeed.

Federal Sources of Assistance if Your Child Has a Reading Problem or Learning Disability

ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education
The Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 20191-1589

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities
P.O. Box 1492
Washington, D.C. 20013-1492

The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped
Library of Congress
1291 Taylor Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20542

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
U.S. Department of Education
Washington, D.C. 20202-2500

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
National Institutes of Health
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Building 31, Room 2A32, MSC-2425
31 Center Drive
Bethesda, MD 20892-2425

☆ U.S. G.P.O.: 1997 424-458

PARTNERSHIP
for Family
Involvement
in Education

Join the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education...

Family-School Partnership Promise

Families and schools across America are increasingly accepting mutual responsibility for children's learning. When families are involved in children's learning, at school and at home, schools work better and students learn more. Schools and families are working with employers and community organizations to develop local partnerships that support a safe school environment where students learn to challenging standards. By working together, exchanging information, sharing decision-making, and collaborating in children's learning, everyone can contribute to the education process.

Coming together as families, local school board governance, administration, teachers and school staff, we form this partnership and affirm the importance of family involvement in children's learning. We pledge to:

- Share responsibility at school and at home to give students a better education and a good start in life.
- Our school will be welcoming to families; reach out to families before problems arise; offer challenging courses; create safe and drug-free learning environments; organize tutoring and other opportunities to improve student learning; and support families to be included in the school decision-making process.
- Our families will monitor student attendance, homework completion and television watching; take the time to talk with and listen to their children; become acquainted with teachers, administrators and school staff; read with younger children and share a good book with a teen; volunteer in school when possible; and participate in the school decision-making process.
- Promote effective two-way communication between families and schools, by schools reducing educational jargon and breaking down cultural and language barriers and by families staying in touch with the school.
- Provide opportunities for families to learn how to help their children succeed in school and for school staff to work with families.
- Support family-school efforts to improve student learning by reviewing progress regularly and strengthening cooperative actions.

We would like to become a member of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. We commit to family-friendly practices and will work with others to form partnerships that support children's learning. (Please type or print the following.)

School Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Phone: _____ **Fax:** _____ **E-mail:** _____

Principal: _____ **Signature:** _____

Parent Organization Representative: _____ **Signature:** _____

Teacher Representative: _____ **Signature:** _____

School Staff Representative: _____ **Signature:** _____

Contact Person: _____ **Title:** _____

Send to: Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-8173 or fax to 202-401-3036 to receive your **Family-School Partnership Promise Certificate.**